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Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 RABAT 06344 241554Z

20
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 IO-13 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 FEA-01 OES-06 /093 W
---------- 107570
R 241515Z NOV 76
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 393
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 6344

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR AG SA SS MO
SUBJECT: SAUDI CROWN PRINCE FAHD'S NOVEMBER 11-22 VISIT TO MOROCCO

REF: RABAT 6267

1. SUMMARY: SAUDI CROWN PRINCE FAHD'S EFFORT TO RECONCILE MOROCCO AND ALGERIA HAS LED AT LEAST TO A MORE REASONABLE MOROCCAN TONE VIS-A-VIS ALGERIA. FOR THE MOROCCANS, FAHD'S 11-DAY VISIT WAS A HELPFUL, TANGIBLE SIGN OF SAUDI SYMPATHY, PARTICULARLY AT THE MOMENT KING WAS PREPARING FOR HIS IMPORTANT VISIT TO FRANCE. END SUMMARY

2. CROWN PRINCE FAHD, WHO ARRIVED IN MOROCCO ON NOVEMBER 11, WAS SEEN OFF ON NOVEMBER 22 BY KING HASSAN, WHO THEN IMMEDIATELY LEFT FOR STATE VISIT TO FRANCE.

3. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED NOV. 22 WAS FRIENDLY IN TONE AND CONTAINED NO SURPRISES. IT PREDICTABLY STRESSED ARAB AFFAIRS, INCLUDING A CALL FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORY AND THE LIBERATION OF JERUSALEM, AN EXPRESSION OF SATISFACTION WITH LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS, AND SUPPORT FOR THE
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PAGE 02 RABAT 06344 241554Z

REINFORCEMENT OF ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY. THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO NOTED

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

THAT PRINCE FAHD HAD ATTENDED THE INAUGURATION IN SAFI OF THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF PHOSPHORIC ACID COMPLEXES AND THE LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE OF THE SECOND. KING HASSAN ACCEPTED A RENEWED INVITATION TO VISIT SAUDI ARABIA, POSSIBLY EARLY NEXT YEAR.

4. THE COMMUNIQUE MADE NO REFERENCE TO SAUDI MEDIATION BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO, NOR TO FAHD'S TRAVEL TO MAURITANIA (NOV. 14) AND ALGERIA (NOV. 15-16) AND FONMIN SAUD'S NOV. 19 TALKS WITH BOUMEDIENE AND SUBSEQUENT SESSION WITH KING HASSAN IN RABAT.

5. WHILE MOROCCAN OFFICIALS CONTINUED EXTREMELY DISCREET ON SAUDI MEDIATION, KING HASSAN ADDRESSED THE SUBJECT IN A PRESS CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 20 WITH FRENCH "PRESS CLUB OF EUROPE NUMBER ONE." KING CHARACTERIZED THE SAUDI CONCILIATION MOVES AS MOTIVATED BY MODESTY AND VIRTUAL DISINTERESTEDNESS, SAYING: "SAUDI ARABIA, AND PRINCE FAHD PARTICULARLY, ON INSTRUCTION FROM HIS MAJESTY KHALED, HAVE UNDERTAKEN A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PROBING EFFORTS. FOR OUR PART, WE CONSIDER THAT THESE DEMARCHES CAN DO NO HARM -- ON THE CONTRARY -- FOR AS LONG AS DIALOGUE CONTINUES, THERE ARE ALWAYS POSSIBILITIES OF AN ARRANGEMENT." WHEN PRESSED, HE EXPRESSED A VAUGE WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH BOUMEDIENE.

6. KING WENT ON TO SAY THAT MOROCCO HAD AGREED THAT THE SAUDI EFFORTS BE UNDERTAKEN, BUT ON CONDITION THAT "THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF DISCUSSING THE MOROCCAN OR MAURITANIAN CHARACTER OF THE SAHARA. FOR ALL THE REST, WE ARE AND SHALL REMAIN OPEN TO ANY INITIATIVE WHICH CAN SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE, AND RESPECT THE PERSONALITY OF THE PERSONAGES IN QUESTION, THE PRESIDENT OF MAURITANIA, THE PRESIDENT OF ALGERIA AND THE KING OF MOROCCO, SO THAT THERE SHOULD BE NEITHER VICTOR NOR VANQUISHED, FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION CANNOT BE BUILT UPON THE DEBRIS OF SENSITIVITY OR OF A SHATTERED AMOUR-PROPRE." IN AN INTERVIEW WITH FRENCH TV CHANNEL TWO CARRIED ON LOCAL T.V. NOV. 22, THE KING ALLUDED TO SIGNS OF ALGERIAN INTEREST IN LESSENING TENSIONS, BUT THIS SEGMENT OF THE INTERVIEW WAS OMITTED FROM THE TEXT CARRIED IN THE PRESS FOLLOWING DAY.

7. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND GOM'S INVITATION TO FAHD TO ATTEND THE SAFI INAUGURATION WAS INTENDED TO UNDERLINE THE SERIOUSNESS OF MOROCCO'S DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. FAHD'S APPEARANCE IN SAFI HAS GENERATED SPECULATION THAT THE SAUDIS MAY MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION
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TO MOROCCO'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF SUCH A SAUDI INTENTION HAS YET EMERGED, HOWEVER. BASED ON KING HASSAN'S COMMENTS ON HIS EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DECEMBER OPEC PRICE MEETING, WE BELIEVE OPEC POLICIES WERE PROBABLY ALSO DISCUSSED (RABAT 6336).

8. KING'S REMARKS ON SAUDI MEDIATION ARE MOST DETAILED, AS WELL AS AUTHORITATIVE, MOROCCAN PRONOUNCEMENT THUS FAR. PROSPECTS FOR

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

SUBSTANTIAL MOVEMENT TOWARD MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN ACCOMMODATION DO NOT SEEM PROMISING BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING WIDE SUBSTANTIVE GAP. THE SAUDIS, HOWEVER, ARE CREDITED BY ARAB OBSERVERS HERE AS HAVING NEW LEVERAGE OVER ALGERIA IN THE FORM OF POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE TO A DETERIORATING ECONOMY. IN ANY CASE, THE SAUDIS HAVE AT LEAST CONTRIBUTED TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN TONE OF HIGH LEVEL MOROCCAN STATEMENTS ABOUT ALGERIA, AS COMPARED WITH THE RECENT MOROCCAN FOCUS ON THE ALLEGED ALGERIAN MASSING OF TROOPS AND OTHER HOSTILE ACTIVITIES (RABAT 5847). AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOM MEDIA HAVE CONTINUED TO CARRY STATEMENTS BY ALGERIAN POLITICAL EXILES CRITICAL OF CURRENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS INSIDE ALGERIA.

9. IN SUM, THE FAHD VISIT WAS CLEARLY A DIPLOMATIC PLUS FOR KING. FAHD'S LENGTHY PRESENCE WAS A TANGIBLE SIGN OF SAUDI SYMPATHY FOR MOROCCO, WHILE LAUNCHING OF SAUDI MEDIATION GAVE THE KING THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROJECT IMAGE OF REASONABLENESS AND WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE WITH ALGERIA. THE KING THUS RECEIVED WELCOME WHELP IN PREPARING THE ATMOSPHERE FOR CURRENT TRIP TO PARIS, HIS FIRST TRAVEL ABROAD SINCE 1973. WHILE GAINS TO THE SAUDIS ARE LESS CLEAR TO US, DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS HERE FEEL THAT THE SAUDIS WERE GRATEFUL FOR THE KING'S POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE HOLDING OF RIYADH SUMMIT, WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE KING, INVOLVED RECONCILING SADAT AND ASSAD.
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